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ABSTRACT

In creating the Texas Task Force on High School Education, the State Board of Education directed the task force to review the status of public high school education in Texas and develop a policy to prepare the state's high schools for the 21st century. This report is the task force's response to that charge. The first section analyzes the need for restructuring Texas high school education. Inadequacies of the current system are demonstrated in academic underachievement, particularly among minority students, and health and safety issues. Subsequent sections offer information on each part of the high school education policy: mission; community of learning; organization; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; professional growth and development; and student supports. Recommendations for restructuring include the following: abandon academic tracking and class ranking; pair each student with a teacher to develop an individualized learning plan; improve teacher working conditions and give teachers more control; coordinate student support services with other professionals; and develop an instruction-focused, flexible daily school schedule. To implement the task force policy, it is recommended that secondary education build educational excellence and equity, provide professional development, create a network to support high school restructuring, communicate and coordinate high school reform, and establish local and state conferences on high school education. (Contains 35 references.) (LMI)

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EA 025 092

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One Student at a Time

Report of the State Board of Education Task Force on High School Education

Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas
October 1992

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Report of the Texas Task Force on High School Education

CONTENTS

Executive Summary 1

Foreword 5

The Case for Restructuring High Schools 7

Mission 17

Community of Learning 23

Organization 29

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment 35

Professional Growth and Development 43

Student Supports 49

Implementation Steps 57

Sources 62

Project Staff 64

Cross-Agency Working Group 65

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN CREATING THE Task Force on High School Education, the State Board of Education directed the task force to review the status of public high school education in Texas and develop a policy with supporting recommendations to prepare the state's high schools for the 21st century. This report is the task force's response to that charge.

Appointed by the Chairman of the State Board of Education in January 1992, this task force included members of the State Board of Education, representatives of state government, and appointees from organizations representing parents, high school teachers, counselors, and principals, district administrators, local school boards, higher education faculty, and the business community. Through public hearings held all over Texas and meetings with state and national experts, the task force developed a consensus on the current state of high school education and the direction it should take as the new century approaches.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The task force found that our students enter high school ill prepared to attempt a rigorous course of studies, that those who do not drop out tend too often to enroll in watered-down courses which fail to prepare them for the exit-level assessments needed for graduation, and that the achievement test performance of our college-bound graduates has not improved for the past 16 years. Because the state's economic, social, and political futures depend upon an educated populace, the task force considers the

academic underachievement of our high school students a direct threat to current and future citizens of Texas.

The task force also found academic performance to be consistently depressed among minority students. The task force views this equity gap with the greatest concern. As long as it persists, this gap threatens the future of Texas — a state where minorities are the fastest growing segments of both the labor market and the voting population.

The task force's review also uncovered alarming trends concerning the health and safety of today's high school students. Rates of adolescent and teen pregnancies in Texas are among the highest in the nation. A majority of secondary school students report drinking alcohol and alcohol figures in a large number of traffic deaths among teenagers. The juvenile arrest rate is on the rise and, with the violent death rate for Texas teens steadily increasing in recent years, the task force noted that personal safety has clearly become an overriding concern for high school students, parents, and staff.

VISITING HIGH SCHOOLS around Texas, task force members encountered students, parents, educators, and administrators who bore witness to the telling statistics. They met a 15 year-old carrying a full course load while expecting her second child. They saw a teacher's eyes fill with tears while describing a typical day with students who would not or could not learn. They witnessed the disparate educational resources available to Texas students, visiting one high school with a planetarium and another with only two microphones for its auditorium.

Texas high schools have traditionally kept abreast of changes in society. However, the task force concluded that the time had come to address the new problems facing high schools by redefining the relationships between students and teachers and between schools and communities to make high school a productive experience for all.

The consensus developed by the task force is expressed in its policy statement on high school education — a policy adopted by the State Board of Education in July 1992. This report expands the policy statement into specific recommendations for different levels of the education enterprise including the classroom, campus, school district, Regional Education Service Centers, institutions of higher education, the Texas Education Agency, the State Board of Education, and the Legislature.

New Dimensions in Learning

The task force challenges all levels of the education enterprise to focus on the high school's primary academic mission and calls on the business and higher education communities to help high schools identify the proficiencies that will ensure success for graduates in the coming century. It envisions high schools as communities of learning — communities where both students and staff are engaged in intellectual growth. To this end, the task force urges high schools to abandon divisive practices such as academic tracking and class ranking in favor of opportunities for students and staff to support one another's growth.

To combat the anonymity of today's high schools and to make explicit the links between academic achievement and postsecondary goals, the task force recommends that each student be paired with a teacher who will advise and counsel the student on academic planning as well as other matters throughout high school. As part of the transition from middle to high school, the student develops an individual education plan in consultation with family members and this teacher. Built from a core of high quality learning opportunities available to all students, this individual learning plan is anchored in specific postsecondary goals that are valued by the student because they are selected by the student. All those involved in its initial design — student, teacher, and family — would regularly review and adjust this plan to ensure that

the student retains rather than limits options while progressing to graduation.

Recognizing the strains that this recommendation places on current organizational and staffing features of Texas high schools, the task force recommends that the high school's daily schedule be wholly instructional in design and flexible enough to accommodate the diverse instructional and personal needs of students. Since its recommendations would expand teachers' professional responsibilities, the task force also recommends that classroom teachers have longer contracts, receive better pay, and exercise direct control over planning for their continued professional development.

The task force recognizes that academic performance is built upon a foundation of family and community supports — a foundation undermined by the many economic and social stresses affecting Texas students and their families. The task force calls for a coordinated effort between educators and other human service professionals to ensure that our high school students have the array of supports that they need to succeed. At the same time, the task force challenges high schools to develop opportunities for the parents of students to become meaningfully and regularly involved in their children's education.

RE-CREATING HIGH SCHOOLS to prepare our students and our state for the coming century is a daunting task. It will require both an expansion and a redirection of the resources Texas invests in its high schools. It will necessitate unprecedented coordination and support among all levels of the educational enterprise, from the school room to the board room to the state house. It will need patient, persistent advocates.

In developing its policy and recommendations, the task force can only point the way and begin the process. The rest is up to today's Texans. Tomorrow's Texans depend upon you.

FOREWORD

THE TASK FORCE on High School Education was appointed by the Chairman of the State Board of Education in January 1992 and given the following charge:

The Task Force will develop a policy for adoption by the State Board of Education that ensures that graduates of the state's public high schools are prepared for continued achievement in post-secondary education, in the workforce, or in the services.

In reporting on the state of high school education in Texas, the Task Force will recommend changes in policies and programs to improve middle school-to-high school, high school-to-college, and high school-to-workforce transitions.

The policy statement will be accompanied by specific recommendations for board or administrative actions required to implement the high school education policy and any legislative recommendations needed to support that policy.

The task force included members from the State Board of Education, members appointed by the chairman of the board, and representatives named by the Governor and the heads of the Department of Health, the Department of Human Service, and the Higher Education Coordinating Board. Among the appointees to the task force were parents, teachers, counselors, and principals from high schools, district administrators, local trustees, higher education faculty, and representatives of private industry.

This report is built around a policy on high school education developed by the task force and adopted by the State Board of Education. This policy envisions the high schools that the task force believes can ensure that all Texas students achieve their chosen postsecondary goals.

The report proceeds from an analysis of the need for restructuring Texas high school education to modules concerning each part of the policy on high school education — Mission; Community of Learning; Organization; Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Professional Growth and Development; and Student Supports.

Each module begins with the text from the relevant section of the policy, discusses the philosophy behind the task force's recommendations for implementing that section of policy, and then presents the recommendations themselves. Recommendations are offered for each level of the educational enterprise — the classroom, campus, district, Regional Education Service Center, higher education, the Texas Education Agency, the State Board of Education, and the Legislature. Where appropriate, recommendations are also offered for other partners in the educational process including parents, community organizations, businesses, and state agencies.

The report concludes by identifying immediate next steps in the implementation of the policy that the task force believes will prepare Texas high schools for the 21st century.

The Case for Restructuring

"If our students fail, we fail."

— The Texas IAF Vision for Public Schools

THE CASE FOR RESTRUCTURING

EDUCATION HAS ALWAYS served to prepare our children for full participation in adult life. Because adult life brings opportunities and responsibilities in many domains — adults create families, pursue careers, establish communities, and maintain democracies — schools have traditionally shared their preparatory responsibilities with the family, institutions of faith, and the workplace. *One argument for changing our schools is that the world in and for which they were designed no longer exists.*

Because of economic stress, geographic mobility, and cultural diversity, "family" means many different things — or nothing at all — in the lives of today's students. Today's schools cannot always depend on families to provide the support they did for earlier generations of students and teachers. Today's families, in turn, often find traditional forms of school involvement inaccessible or inappropriate.

Religion is no longer the unifying theme that it was when today's education system developed. Apart from the uncertainties this change has created in the moral rearing of our children, the departure of religious institutions from the daily lives of many of today's families removes an informal but highly effective support network that community organizations and government agencies can only partially replace. Again, schools may be deprived of a critical partner in transforming the youth into the adult.

Finally, the workplace has changed in ways unimaginable at the time our traditional schools were created. The vigorous regional economy with an insatiable capacity for

"Teachers...see today's students burdened and distracted as never before by various family dysfunctions, peer pressures, substance abuse, pregnancies, demands of jobs or other out-of-school responsibilities and a general lack of support from family or the larger community."

— Milbrey McLaughlin, *What matters most in teachers' workplace context?*

low skill workers seeking a secure career is fast becoming extinct. It is being replaced by a diversifying economy that is global in scale, consumes rather than rewards low skill employees, and promises a future only to those whose education and learning are lifelong. These changes in the workplace are only now becoming apparent to students, families, teachers, taxpayers, and employers accustomed to equating basic high school education with entry into secure employment.

So at a general level it is evident that the world has changed in ways that both isolate schools and increase their importance. *Complementing this general argument for change are the facts that too many of our children leave high school without graduating and that too many of our graduates are academically unprepared for the world that awaits them.*

AN APPRECIABLE NUMBER of freshmen have not mastered eighth grade mathematics and language arts: On the 1991-92 TAAS examination, one in three freshmen failed the writing section, 40% failed reading, and more than half failed mathematics. More than a third of our ninth grade students are overage for grade, accounting for 82% of the more than 21,000 ninth graders who dropped out of school in 1989-90. Only 65% of our freshmen will complete high school and receive a diploma, a graduation rate that places Texas forty-second among all states.

Fewer than one in 20 Texas high school students enrolls in honors, takes advanced placement courses, or earns recognition for academic achievement on the TAAS. At the same time, almost a quarter of our high school students are enrolled in mathematics courses requiring less than ninth grade proficiency, one in eight takes a below grade level language arts class, and one in 12 takes less demanding science courses. The price paid for this low quality curriculum is evident — more than half of our eleventh graders fail at least one section of the exit-level TAAS and, as was painfully evident during the spring of 1992,

City of dropouts

If the 297,637 students who have dropped out of Texas schools since the 1987-88 school year established their own city, that city would be the tenth largest in Texas.

1. Houston	3,301,957
2. Dallas	2,553,362
3. San Antonio	1,302,099
4. Forth Worth-Arlington	1,332,053
5. Austin	781,492
6. El Paso	5916 10
7. McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	383,545
8. Beaumont	361,226
9. Corpus Christi	349,894
10. Dropouts	*297,637*
11. Brownsville-Harlingen	260,120

The annual costs associated with school dropouts are estimated at $17 billion, with dropouts far more likely to be unemployed, on welfare, in prison, and to become unwed parents.

—*Texas Business Today*, February 1992

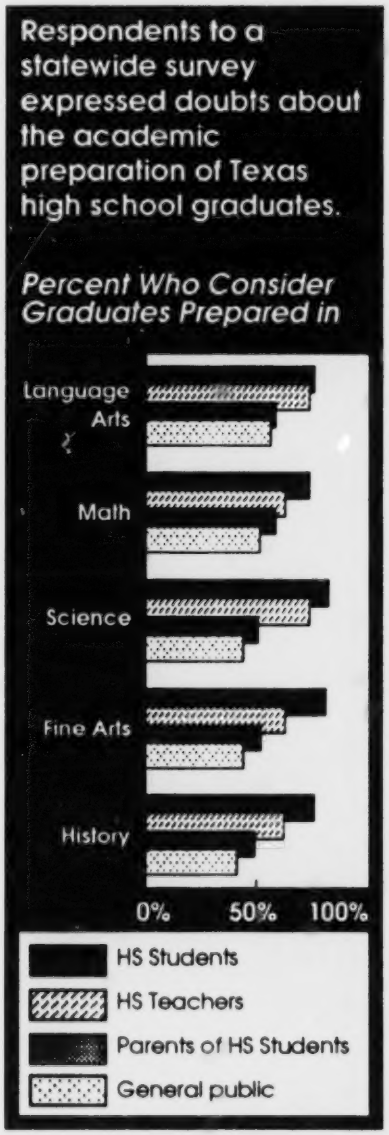
thousands of seniors cannot graduate because they have not passed all sections of that test by the end of twelfth grade.

The picture among college-bound students also gives little reason to cheer. It is known that students who enroll in more than 20 academic units during high school score higher on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) than do students whose high school credits are based on less challenging courses. Nationally, 40% of students taking the SAT have 20 or more academic units. In Texas, the comparable figure is 23%. As might be expected, the SAT scores of Texas students have shown essentially no improvement over the past 16 years. A third of Texas high school graduates intending to enter one of the state's public colleges or universities fail at least one section of the TASP test, meaning that they will have to enroll in remedial courses after graduation from high school.

The generally poor academic achievement of our high school students is compounded by the fact that in all state-level comparisons of academic achievement, minority students have lower scores than their white counterparts. For instance, while 64% of white students passed all sections of the ninth grade TAAS in 1990-91, only 35% of Hispanic and 29% of African-American students had similar success. The same pattern of differences emerged on the 1991-92 exit-level TAAS examination. The state average SAT scores for white students in 1990-91 was 115 points higher than the average for Hispanic students and 190 points higher than that of African-American students. Similarly, 76% of white students passed the TASP on their first attempt, while 58% of Hispanic and 47% of African-American students passed.

Hence, while new jobs in the year 2000 are predicted to require almost two years of education beyond high school, tens of thousands of our students are dropping out without diplomas and many more thousands are taking watered down courses that allow them to perform at academic

Respondents to a statewide survey expressed doubts about the academic preparation of Texas high school graduates.



levels below what should be acceptable and will be required. This evident lack of excellence and equity in the academic preparation of tomorrow's parents, neighbors, voters, workers, and leaders imperils Texas as gravely as any threat in our state's history.

We do not need to wait for evidence of that peril because the evidence is at hand. Two good indicators of a society's health are its wealth and the condition of its most fragile members. Texas went from the sixteenth wealthiest state to the sixteenth poorest state in the country between 1983 and 1991. Over the same period, almost one of every four Texas children came to live in poverty. Currently, three in 10 Texas children are not covered by health insurance and 10% do not live with their parents.

Per capita income: How Texas ranks among the fifty states

16th

35th

1983 1991

To improve its economic lot and that of its citizens, Texas will have to field an educated workforce that can compete in the technologically advanced global economy of the next century. The equity gaps in academic achievement are particularly disturbing in this context, since it is estimated that by the year 2000 the number of persons in the state's labor force will increase by 128% for Hispanics and 38% for African-Americans compared to 6% for whites.

TEXAS ALREADY ENJOYS unenviable positions on several indicators of the health and well-being of its citizens, particularly its high school aged citizens. Compounding, if not contributing to, their academic difficulties, large numbers of Texas high school students engage in high-risk behaviors. Seventy-six percent of secondary school students drink alcohol and the average high school drinker consumes 41 drinks per month. Ten percent of students between grades 7 and 12 report that they go to class drunk at least once per year while nearly one third of high school seniors admit to driving drunk at least one time during the year.

While narcotic abuse has declined in recent years, abuse of other drugs continues to be a problem. A sad indicator

of the magnitude of the substance abuse problem among our teenagers is the fact that alcohol or drugs are contributing factors in a large percentage of fatal motor vehicle accidents involving teens. Motor vehicle accidents cause more deaths among Texas teenagers than any other factor.

"Over the past 30 years, adolescents constitute the only population in the United States whose health status has not improved."

—Bushong, Coverdale & Battaglia, *Adolescent mental health: A review of preventive interventions*

Substance abuse also figures directly or indirectly in the increasing involvement of Texas teenagers in crime. The number of juveniles between 10 and 16 arrested in Texas rose from nearly 87,000 in 1982 to more than 108,000 in 1989. While arrests typically involve property offenses, violent crime involving juveniles is growing, evidenced by a three percent increase in the violent death rate for Texas teens between 1984 and 1989. Violence is clearly a concern to Texas high school students, as respondents to a recent survey ranked personal safety among their chief day-to-day concerns at school.

High school students also place themselves at risk by engaging in sexual activity at increasingly younger ages. There is little reason to believe that sexually active Texas teens are different from those across the nation in suffering from sexually transmitted diseases at twice the rate of people over 20. A recent survey of eighth and tenth graders found that more than half did not know how to avoid infections spread through sexual activity.

Of course, the sexually active teen can become the teen parent, as over 46,000 teenagers discovered in Texas during 1990. As many as 30 percent of these mothers will become pregnant again within two years of delivering their first child. The personal, educational, social, and economic costs of early parenthood are difficult to quantify but can only be substantial.

"One in six Texas teenagers has no health insurance, one in eight will be diagnosed with a mental illness, and one in three will consider suicide."

—Reaching out to youth: A report of the Commission on the Mental Health of Adolescents and Young Adults.

Thus, although more of our teachers are better trained than at any time in our state's history, more of our graduates than ever before enroll in our state's colleges and universities, and our educational efforts in the pre-

Over the three years from 1987 through 1989, Texas showed either no improvement or a worsening in the violent death rate among teens, the percent of all live births that were to single teens, the percent of children living in poverty, and the percent of children living in single-parent homes.

—1992 Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being

vention of substance abuse and HIV infection are among the finest in the nation, data on our high school students clearly indicate that something is wrong. Indicators of either the current well-being of our high school students or their preparedness for adult life are enough to suggest that high schools need to change.

A third argument for changing our high schools rests on insights that can be gained only by visiting high school campuses, as the task force did. School grounds give visitors a glimpse of the reality behind the statistics. Such glimpses confirm the reasons for concern but also suggest paths of improvement.

ONE HEARS ABOUT the involvement of juveniles in violence and criminal behavior, but one sees assistant principals with walkie-talkies, the armed security staff, the concern with gangs, and the drug-sniffing dogs. Experts extol the power of effective teaching and active learning, but that power can be felt only in a classroom where the two meet. The pros and cons of academic tracking become concrete on a high school campus where students are convinced either of the ultimate importance of a grade point average or of their own inability to learn. Understanding that many students are sexually active is one thing but meeting the 15 year-old who is carrying a full course load and her second child is quite another.

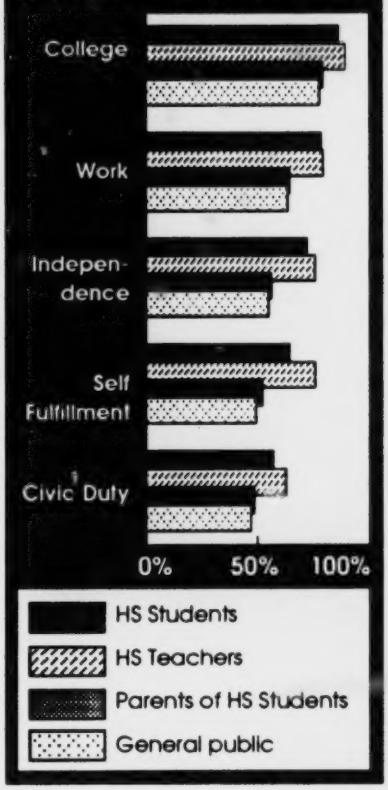
Statistics indicate that too few students attempt a high quality curriculum, but it is on the high school campus that one meets the seniors who will not graduate because they cannot pass a test covering basic algebra, geometry, and English. Reports of frustration and disillusionment among teachers are commonplace, but it is at meetings with faculty that the teacher's eyes fill with tears while describing a typical day with students who will not or cannot learn. It is well known that all schools don't have the same resources, but the reality of unequal resources is driven home in visiting one high school with a planetarium and another with only two microphones for its

auditorium. The diversity of our state becomes evident while lunching in a cafeteria that is a crossroads of cultures and languages.

Whether from an examination of the historical trends buffeting our education system, a review of the academic achievement or personal status of our high school students, or the direct experience of a high school campus, one finds reasons for hope but abundant causes for concern. Our high schools are educating more students to a higher level than any time in the history of Texas. However, too many students of all ethnicities and all ability levels do not succeed now and will not succeed in the coming century. Despite outward appearance and contrary to some expert opinion, our high schools have changed in important and appropriate ways as our state and society have matured. But fundamental changes to the economy, population, and politics of Texas necessitate changes beyond any that our high schools have thus far undergone.

The task force policy on high school education provides a vision of the 21st century high schools of Texas. To initiate the discussions that will lead to the creation of those high schools, the task force offers its recommendations for restructuring Texas high schools.

Concerns over graduates' readiness for success after high school are evident in the survey responses of many Texas parents as well as the general public.



Mission

"We must remember that the purpose of all education is to create whole human beings."

—The Forgotten Half

HIGH SCHOOLS PREPARE the knowledgeable, capable citizens who build and maintain our free and prosperous society. Our state's cultural diversity, the knowledge-intensive global economy in which we compete, and the stresses that undermine our families and threaten our children call for fundamental changes in how our high schools accomplish this mission. While there is no simple formula, there is a compelling logic for such changes: Our public education system will either prepare Texas for or exclude Texas from full participation in the 21st century.

The traditional goals of a high school education — basic knowledge of academic subjects coupled with good citizenship and marketable skills — are not sufficient for the coming century. During the next century graduates will have to handle diverse information, perform effectively in cooperative work groups, solve complex problems, and continue to learn in a rapidly changing world and workplace. High quality, meaningful performance in these real world activities will be required of all graduates in the coming century. All students can learn; all students must learn. Our students and our state can settle for nothing less.

Our future also depends on our ability to live together. Whether our cultural diversity enriches or embattles Texas in the next century will depend on how we educate successive generations to value and participate in the democratic system, cherish individual liberty, accept social responsibility, and celebrate the varied expressions of our common humanity.

"High-performance workplaces...require...the ability to manage resources, to work amicably and productively with others, to acquire and use information, to master complex systems, and to work with a variety of technologies."

—Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance

MISSION

PHILOSOPHY

"Academic prowess that is divorced from ethical beliefs can lead us to a future in the hands of citizens who place little or no value in the principles upon which our country was founded. It is our democratic foundation that makes us unique. It is the cultivation of our diverse human resources that will again make us strong."

—Dr. Judy Stevens, Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and Spring Branch ISD, testifying to the Task Force on High School Education, February 5, 1992.

"Citizens will have to understand others and their interests if they are to renegotiate the terms of their interdependence successfully and without strife."

—The Texas I.A.F. Vision for Public Schools

THE TASK FORCE used its visits to high schools, public hearings, and opinion surveys to determine what Texas citizens think is the primary mission of the high school. Although they used different terms, students, parents, teachers, employers, citizens with no direct involvement in high school education, and even inmates of state prisons identified the same primary mission for Texas high schools — to ensure that all students graduate and to educate all graduates for success after high school.

For the task force, this consensus is no less important for being obvious. While our high schools must clearly respond to the many family, social, economic, demographic, and political influences that affect their students, their one undisputed, primary, and clear mission is academic. In its recommendations, the task force calls on all levels of the educational enterprise to gauge each of their actions by answering a simple question: Does this action further the primary academic mission of the high school?

In affirming the primacy of the high school's academic mission, the task force also recognizes the need to ensure that a student's high school education provides a realistic preparation for success in the student's chosen post-secondary domain. Academic achievement is sterile unless it means proficiency in the kinds of performances required to follow a path leading from high school to concrete success in the real world. The task force calls on all concerned with high school education — students, parents, educators, employers, and members of the community — to develop and apply a clear understanding of the requirements for success in the coming century.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CLASSROOM

- Ensure that all students understand the relationships among classroom learning activities and the proficiencies required for success in their chosen postsecondary domains.
- Provide learning opportunities that enable students to share tasks and responsibilities with other students of differing abilities and backgrounds.
- Nurture appreciation of cultural diversity through learning opportunities involving all parts of the curriculum.

CAMPUS

- Focus on the primary academic mission of preparing all students for successful performance in the postsecondary settings that they and the real world value.
- Enlist broad, meaningful, and ongoing community participation in its primary academic mission.
- Participate in mutually supportive networks with feeder campuses as well as other high schools.

DISTRICT

- Implement hiring, budgeting, and organizational practices that support the primary academic mission of high schools.
- Coordinate K-12 operations in light of this mission, including articulation between middle and high schools.
- Involve parents, students, educators, and members of the community in identifying the performances that lead to postsecondary success.

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

- Plan the provision of technical assistance to high schools in consultation with practitioners from client districts.
- Act as clearinghouses linking high schools to regional, state, and national resources of value to high schools focused on performance.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Hire and promote faculty who can prepare and support the professionals who provide the academic foundation for postsecondary success.
- Broaden recruitment and training to bring into education the broad spectrum of talents needed to prepare students for the 21st century.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

- Support the primary academic mission of high schools through consistent, coordinated, and meaningful assistance in all areas relevant to performance-focused education.
- Employ waivers, discretionary funds, and networking capabilities to support innovations required by academically effective high schools.
- Increase efforts to obtain federal, state, and private support for high school education.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Adopt performance goals specifying the competencies that graduates of public education need to succeed in the coming century.

- Work with the Coordinating Board to adjust college admission procedures to support a system of high school education focused on performance.
- Adopt and publicize policies leading to the provision of high quality educational opportunities to all Texas high school students.

STATE LEGISLATURE

- Create incentives for higher education to coordinate with and contribute to a performance-focused system of high school education.

PARENTS

- Demand that high schools prepare their children for the 21st century and support high schools in this mission.

BUSINESSES

- Make performance requirements clear to educators and offer forms of collaboration that support the primary academic mission of high schools.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Incorporate the broader mission of public education into the organizational mission.

Community of Learning

"The people in schools that work don't sit back and *hope* that a child connects with a caring adult; they make sure that it happens."

—The One Place: A New Role for American Schools

HIGH SCHOOL IS a community — an exciting and vibrant community of learners engaged in intellectual growth. Through this growth, members of the high school community expand their capacity to engage in the productive, personal, social, and aesthetic activities of adulthood.

Students enter this community as adolescents and exit it as adults. They demand independence yet wish to be connected. They desire respect and recognition but are still developing as responsible decision makers. They are interested in alternatives but can be confused over goals.

Creative, energetic, and individually unique, these young people thrive in a community that helps them make sense of the past, find meaning in the present, and develop confidence in the future. They deserve a high school where they feel welcome, safe, comfortable, and valued. The high school is a community to nurture the whole person — the citizen, the parent, the visionary, and the aesthetic as well as the student and the wage earner.

"In communities of learning, all teachers and students feel included as full-fledged participants in the school; teachers and students relate to one another in less specialized roles, but more as whole persons; they participate and take responsibility for the collective life of the school; and they can count upon one another for help in meeting both individual and collective needs.

—Fred Newmann, *A framework for school restructuring*

COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

PHILOSOPHY

"Among the particularly promising...approaches to be encouraged are...the community education movement, particularly...the concept of the lighted schoolhouse, which would open libraries, playgrounds, recreational facilities, and schools to the community seven days a week, 12 months of the year."

—The Forgotten Half

LEARNING IS A social as well as an intellectual process. It depends upon interactions between students and teachers. These interactions are strongly influenced by the perceptions that each group holds of the other. When teachers believe that students are willing and able to learn and students believe that teachers care about them and want them to succeed, the results are astounding in terms of both the students' academic achievements and the teachers' professional growth. The task force gave special attention to this social facet of learning and focused on the high school as a community — a community dedicated to learning.

Members of a community know one another. Members of a community help one another. Members of a community care how their community relates to other communities. The task force recognizes that certain features of today's high schools work against the development of these aspects of community. Teachers frustrated with frequent, shifting, and ill-considered mandates; with inadequate educational resources and opportunities for professional development; and with criticism rather than support from their communities resolve their frustration by declaring parents uninvolved and students unable or unwilling to learn. The ties that bind a community together can be difficult to develop on a large, impersonal campus, contributing to symptoms of social disarray such as discipline-related problems and a widespread concern for personal safety. While the competitive features of high schools — class ranks, interscholastic contests — benefit both individuals and groups, competition can also act to separate students from one another and undermine the self-image that is supposed to be enhanced through education. The opportunities that high school students have

to know and help one another can be further limited when students are tracked into different academic streams or isolated from their peers by participation in programs for "special populations."

In developing recommendations intended to enhance the sense of community on the high school campus, the task force rejects simplistic proposals such as limiting high schools to some arbitrary number of students or doing away with interscholastic competition. Instead, the task force offers recommendations to help end the isolation and anonymity of both students and staff; to promote meaningful student, parent, and community participation in educational decision making; to help students and staff to appreciate one another as both learners and teachers; and to support academic progress while promoting an appreciation that personal growth occurs in both the academic and non-academic domains. While no one of these recommendations can by itself transform a high school into a community of learning, the task force believes that its recommendations in this area are important steps toward a most desirable goal.

"Tracking — however well intentioned and seemingly objectively implemented — leads to an unequal distribution of school resources, with academically and socially disadvantaged students receiving less."

—Jeannie Oakes, *Can tracking research inform practice?*

COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

RECOMMENDATIONS

CLASSROOM

- Recognize that teachers as well as students are learners.
- Highlight the links between the teacher's subject area expertise and the quality of learning opportunities available to students.
- Create learning opportunities that correspond to the diverse interests and aspirations typical of young learners.

CAMPUS

- Recognize and reward the individual learning accomplishments of both students and staff.
- Employ departmental, grouping, instructional, guidance, and mentoring practices to reduce the anonymity of students and the isolation of staff, particularly on large campuses.

- Broaden extracurricular participation by balancing resources between intramural activities and interscholastic competition.
- Ensure meaningful and representative student participation in all areas of campus decision making.
- Seek community input in developing the community learning opportunities offered on the high school campus.
- Apply the expertise of staff and students in support of community-based activities.
- Develop strategies to make students whose learning is impeded by motivational or disciplinary factors full members of the high school community of learners.
- Make explicit examination of the ethical aspects of the community's actions a regular feature of high school.

DISTRICT

- Hire educators because they add to the academic skills and knowledge of the high school community of learning.
- Organize district administration to support the sustained enhancement of learning by all members of the high school community.
- Open high school campuses as centers of learning for their communities.
- Develop educationally positive and legally sound alternatives to measures such as corporal punishment and suspension.

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

- Reward campus educators for their demonstrated expertise by engaging them as paid consultants and mentors for other high schools.
- Support the networking activities that promote contact among high schools.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Expand access of high school students and staff to learning opportunities in higher education.
- Encourage higher education faculty to become members of high school-based communities of learning.
- Adopt admission procedures that emphasize proficiencies and accommodate alternative forms of assessments.
- Provide teacher preparation options that give a broader range of capable students a path back into the high school community.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

- Apply emerging information and communication technologies to the statewide support of high school communities of learning.
- Expand the pool of culturally diverse and professionally competent certified educators through greater use of "nonstandard" certification procedures.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Ensure that rules concerning categorical funding, certification, accreditation, and graduation requirements establish high schools as communities of learning where excellence and equity are the norm.

STATE LEGISLATURE

- Enact statutes that enable high schools to operate as centers of learning for their communities.
- Broaden the ability of the Central Education Agency to grant waivers and exemptions that support the high school community of learning.

COMMUNITY

- Support continued learning through contributions to community learning activities as well as scholarships for high school students and staff.
- Ensure that district and campus hiring practices enhance the high school as a community of learning.

ORGANIZATION

"Rather than structure driving practice, teaching practice will drive structure."

—Richard Elmore, *Why restructuring alone won't improve teaching*

THE ORGANIZATION OF the high school community promotes the continued intellectual growth of both students and staff. Since learning is individually unique in style and pace, the high school's hiring practices, staffing arrangement, instructional calendar, and planning efforts are appropriate only if they provide the flexibility that ensures effective learning opportunities for all students. Since it is a community dedicated to lifelong learning, the high school's structure promotes the continued intellectual development of staff as well as students.

The high school community needs all of its members to engage in meaningful decision making. The most important of these decisions defines the types of real world performances to be expected of high school graduates. To be valid these performances must be valued — by students, parents, educators, and the larger community to which the high school contributes.

"The plain truth is that public schools today are operating on a factory mentality in a post-industrial world. They are designed as mass institutions in which all students are expected to move through the system at the same rate and finish at the same time."

—Today's Children, Tomorrow's Survival: A Call to Restructure Schools

ORGANIZATION

PHILOSOPHY

THERE ARE MANY facets to a high school's organization — years are divided into six week periods and semesters; facilities are arranged in a particular manner; staff are organized according to subject area. But the most significant organizational feature of the high school is its daily schedule. That schedule determines when the campus is open; when teachers teach what to students; when counselors, administrators, and coaches work with students; and when students meet other students and who those students are. Changing the daily schedule has far-reaching effects.

The high school's schedule was a prominent issue in many of the task force's discussions with high school students and staff, testimony during public hearings, and presentations by experts. The task force heard numerous, often opposing, proposals. Some urged that the school day be lengthened by adding another period to the day. Others thought that more electives could be taken by dividing the current school day into more numerous but briefer periods. The task force heard proposals for a school day of fewer but longer periods. Some spoke for the strategic placement of extracurricular periods at particular times during the daily or weekly schedule while others argued for a complete purge of non-academic activities from the instructional schedule. Teachers stressed the need for adequate planning periods as department heads reported difficulties in finding a time to meet with all department members. Student parents reported difficulties coordinating child care with class schedules. Employed students complained of limited offerings during their time on campus. Both students and teachers were intrigued by the notion of flexible scheduling, an idea that caused some unease among school personnel, parents, and community members.

The task force believes that the high school's daily schedule should be wholly instructional in design and content. While the task force values extracurricular activities and recommends that steps be taken to involve more students in such activities, the task force believes that it is inconsistent with the primary academic mission of the high school to address the scheduling needs of extracurricular activities before the instructional needs of students.

The task force also recommends that the instructional schedule become the servant rather than the master of the student's education. The task force believes that an arbitrary, unyielding division of the school day into fixed length periods serves only that minority of students whose learning histories and styles happen to match such a schedule. Supported by appropriate staffing, grouping, instructional, and assessment practices, this recommendation anticipates patterns of learning opportunities better suited to the diverse characteristics and circumstances of current and future high school students.

In response to the objection that a multitude of schedules make a campus unmanageable, the task force notes that issues of campus attendance, safety, and control can be addressed through a variety of scheduling, staffing, and data gathering arrangements. Based upon its belief that a school's organizational features are appropriate only if they support the school's primary academic mission, the task force recommends these changes to a current schedule that does not support student learning.

"The striking similarity of educational environments and strategies is the norm, despite enormous dissimilarities among children. Children come from many different cultural backgrounds. They come from families with varied financial resources, varied family structures and varied language backgrounds. They come with different preparations for school work and return home with different understandings of school."

—The Texas I.A.F. Vision for Public Schools

RECOMMENDATIONS

CLASSROOM

- Emphasize learning opportunities of appropriate time and duration for the individual student.
- Combine group and individual learning arrangements to support student progress toward learning goals.

CAMPUS

- Base the daily campus schedule on the instructional needs of students.
- Ensure that campus schedules accommodate cultural diversity in family and occupational patterns.
- Explore flexible scheduling for both staff and students.
- Structure staff assignments so that teachers assist students in developing and monitoring individual education plans.

DISTRICT

- Support effective learning opportunities through local options such as extended school days and weeks, year round schools, and tuition free summer sessions.
- Staff a liaison function to promote and coordinate community and business supports for high school campuses.

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

- Ensure that technical assistance corresponds to rather than determines the organization of high schools around their primary academic mission.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Structure training agendas around topics relevant to the education of today's high school students.
- Offer training at times compatible with the innovatively scheduled high school.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

- Provide local educators with clear information on organizational strategies known to promote academic success for all students.
- Adopt an organizational structure that makes sense to students, parents, and educators.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Work with state and federal legislators to ensure that categorical funding arrangements support the organization of high schools for successful student learning.

STATE LEGISLATURE

- Adopt funding arrangements that support high school staffing and instructional arrangements to enhance student learning.
- Develop incentives for districts to staff high schools as centers of community activities and learning.

HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

- Review staffing and scheduling arrangements to extend rather than duplicate campus-based activities.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

"The concept of the individualized educational plan...must be extended to all students. General education should become special, and special education should become general."

—Dean Corrigan, *Reinventing the American School*

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND assessment support the continuous progress of each student toward the explicit postsecondary goals set forth in an individual education plan. Begun in middle school and monitored throughout high school, this plan connects learning to goals valued by the student, provides for the meaningful involvement of parents of the student, and allows teachers to guide the educational careers of their students. Successful demonstrations of the real world performances required by the plan's goals are the outcomes that drive the high school's curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

A rigorous, high quality curriculum contains the knowledge required for effective performance. Campus schedules allow teachers to collaborate in planning learning opportunities that highlight connections across subject areas. Instructional practices accommodate differences among students. Assessments inform students and parents while enabling teachers to modify instruction. This combination of knowledge, teaching, and evaluation enables each high school student to build a foundation for success beyond graduation.

"Learning takes place when learners regard what one needs to know as relevant to their lives; when they feel that their teachers are committed to the student's success; when the institutional environment allows for differences in learning methods and styles and is in harmony with the diverse needs and interests of the learner."

—The Forgotten Half

PHILOSOPHY

"Schools will need to place less emphasis on identifying, labeling, sorting, and certifying for roles in larger social and political settings and more emphasis on providing opportunities for individual development."

—Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track, Part 2: Curriculum inequality and school reform*

ON HIGH SCHOOL campuses around the state, the task force met many students excited about learning, pleased with their high school experience, and confident about the future. On those same campuses the task force also heard from and about students with little enthusiasm for learning, little regard for their high school experience, and no clear idea of what lay beyond high school.

Of the differences between these students, three seemed critical. One concerned motivation, with the first group of students clearly eager to apply themselves in the classroom and those from the second group seemingly disengaged from their own education. The groups also differed in goal orientation, the first group seeing a clear relationship between their high school experience and their goals beyond graduation and the second group seeing little relationship between what they did in high school and anything outside of high school. The third difference concerned contact with adults. Adults on the campus — teachers, counselors, coaches, administrators — were familiar with the plans and ambitions of students from the first group. Students from the second group seemed essentially on their own, known to school staff as "those students who won't learn."

While the task force applauds the success of the enthusiastic, engaged students that it met, it is greatly concerned by the large number of students who fall into the second category — students who are literally not taking part in their own education. The impact of the task force's recommendations on curriculum, instruction, and assessment should be reckoned in terms of our high schools' ability to meet the educational needs of that large group of students ill-served by the regular education program who are not

now successful in high school and will not succeed in the coming century.

The task force's recommendations build from beliefs that are no less fundamental for being familiar. The task force believes that all students can learn — that failure to learn is an indictment of the system, not the individual. The task force further believes that all students should be offered only high quality learning opportunities if they are to meet the non-negotiable, high expectations that parents and educators should hold for them. Finally, the task force believes that students can meet these high expectations only when they believe that learning is meaningful and worthy of their best effort.

"Our message to teachers is this: Look beyond your discipline and your classroom to the other courses your students take, to your community, and to the lives of your students outside school. Help your students connect what they learn in class to the world outside."

—*Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance*

Based on these beliefs, the task force recommends for each student an individual education plan begun in middle school and monitored throughout high school solidly anchored to postsecondary goals valued by the student because the student selects them in consultation with family members and a teacher who will advise the student throughout high school. The framework of this plan is built from a set of high quality learning opportunities available to all students. Since they are of high quality, these core opportunities ensure that students retain rather than limit career options as they progress through high school.

"The idea of authentic achievement requires students... to produce knowledge that has value in their lives beyond simply proving their competence in school."

—Fred Newmann, *Linking restructuring to authentic student achievement*

The challenges posed by these recommendations are clear. Family members must remain involved as the student progresses through demanding learning opportunities. Educators must assert their professional competence in arranging learning situations that ensure success for students who have traditionally been diverted into classes that are high school in name only. All levels of the education system — from the campus through the Legislature — must provide effective organization, training, and compensation for classroom teachers whose professional responsibilities expand to include planning and guiding the high school careers of individual students.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Recommendations

CLASSROOM

- Ground the student's learning opportunities in the student's individual education plan.
- Use the curriculum to build learning opportunities that enable students to succeed in real world tasks.
- Employ curriculum materials, instructional practices, and learning contexts appropriate to the student's culture, individual learning style, and postsecondary goals.
- Use relevant authentic assessments to direct instruction and support continuous progress.
- Teach in context, so that learning to know does not become separated from learning to do.

CAMPUS

- Collaborate with parents to develop, monitor, and adjust an individual education plan anchored in explicit postsecondary goals valued by the student.
- Include the development and monitoring of individual education plans in the regularly scheduled advisory activities of all educational staff.
- Develop intramural magnet programs and inter-school exchange arrangements to provide learning opportunities comparable to the diverse interests and talents of students.
- Provide teachers time to collaboratively plan integrated, cross-curricular learning opportunities for students.

DISTRICT

- Allocate educational resources to ensure that all high school students have realistic access to the largest number of high quality learning opportunities.
- Ensure articulation between middle and high schools in the development of individual education plans for high school.

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

- Provide ongoing training opportunities in the application of effective instructional practices.
- Coordinate regional support arrangements between high schools and postsecondary academic and technical institutions.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Prepare all teachers to use assessments in support of instruction and to participate in the development and use of individual education plans.
- Increase co-enrollment and other credit articulation arrangements for high school students and teachers.
- Change admission practices to accommodate authentic assessments of valued performances by high school students seeking admission.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

- Provide effective technical assistance in teaching practices that support improved performance among high school students.
- Develop a model Texas Student Performance Record that documents progress through an individual education plan in a form that is meaningful to parents, employers, and college admissions staff.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Enact rules to ensure that all high school students participate in high quality learning opportunities keyed to success in the real world.
- Ensure that assessment for accountability complements teaching for understanding.
- Include measures of academic success among identified at-risk students in the academic excellence indicator system.

STATE LEGISLATURE

- Establish incentives for districts to offer all students only high quality learning opportunities and to ensure that high school education prepares all students for success in their postsecondary careers.

BUSINESSES

- Collaborate with high schools to provide learning opportunities relevant to students' career goals.
- Demand a meaningful record of high school performance for graduates seeking employment.

PARENTS

- Commit to continuing, direct, and knowledgeable participation in the planning of children's high school education.

Professional Growth and Development

"Of all the resources required for reinventing schools..., none are more important than those devoted to teacher training and staff development."

—Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance

POLICY

PROFESSIONALS OF THE high school community care about quality and have a quality for caring. As experts in their fields, they are committed to careers as learners and teachers, hold high achievement expectations for all students, and create learning opportunities to enable all students to succeed. From novice to mentor, these professionals model lifelong learning by establishing the high school campus as a center of excellence and advancement in the art of teaching. As adult members of the community of learning, these professionals exemplify the highest ethical standards. By nurturing contacts with the world beyond the high school, they invigorate education through collaboration with parents, the community, and other professions and institutions.

"Effective responses to the challenges of contemporary classrooms require a spirited, reflective professional community of teachers (and) a workplace setting in which to examine assumptions about practice, focus collective expertise on solutions based in classroom realities, (and) support efforts to change and grow professionally."

—Milbrey McLaughlin, *What matters most in teachers' workplace context?*

Professional Growth and Development

Philosophy

Student achievement soars when teachers are academically prepared, instruction is modified to best meet student needs and goals, departments foster communication among educators dedicated to lifelong learning, and campuses empower teachers to design both instruction and training. The task force believes, however, that Texas high school teachers are not fully prepared in college for the full scope of their roles and responsibilities, are provided only minimal training beyond their initial preparation, and are not sufficiently involved in meaningful decision making at the campus and district levels. Until these factors are changed, they will constrain the performance of high school students in Texas.

The task force recommends that planning for professional development become an integral part of the campus educational improvement plan derived from site-based decision making. Professional development is achieved not through disconnected inservice education but at the direction of a professional community systematically working to improve student achievement. The leadership of principals is crucial in establishing this community. Faculty departments and teams provide leadership by engendering norms about professional purposes and practices, creating opportunities for communication and problem-solving, and establishing an environment for collegial sharing and support. Teacher assessment encourages communication among faculty and is linked to a process of campus professional development planning that involves administrators, peer coaches, mentors, and trained teacher appraisers.

The task force recognizes that this view of professional development, emphasizing campus planning for sustained

"Given the complexities of the teaching task, we cannot emphasize enough the need to provide teachers and administrators with sufficient authority, time, and assistance to reflect critically on their practice, to experiment, to fail, and to try again."

—Fred Newmann, *Linking restructuring to authentic student achievement*

improvement, may well require changes in the school calendar as well as in the ways that faculty and support staff are organized. The task force urges high school teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff to examine their roles, resources, and responsibilities in order to align standards of professional growth to the high expectations of student achievement held at the campus, district, and state levels. This effort can not thrive if teachers are isolated in their classrooms. It will succeed if teachers are recognized as professionals, able to best inform campus and district administrators about what works best in their classrooms and contribute to planning for their own professional development.

Professional Growth and Development

Recommendations

CLASSROOM

- Evaluate classroom performance to determine the need for and effectiveness of professional development.

CAMPUS

- Include goals, objectives, and strategies for professional development in the campus education improvement plan.
- Develop the capacity of campus staff to interpret and apply information contained in the Academic Excellence Indicators System.
- Develop mentoring relationships and peer coaching opportunities within academic departments and teams.
- Provide faculty with the opportunity to plan for and the time and resources to participate in professional development activities available at the district, regional, and/or higher education level.
- Establish and apply developmental evaluations of classroom teaching.

DISTRICT

- Develop contract, training, and leave arrangements to enable high school educators to enhance their subject expertise and identify goals for professional improvement.
- Collaborate with community employers to make high school professionals aware of the real world value of quality learning opportunities and high performance standards in high school education.
- Encourage campus networks that support professional growth and development.
- Reward teachers for their professional achievements and demonstrated expertise.

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

- Disseminate models that effectively address critical areas of instruction, classroom management, guidance and counseling, administration, and goal setting.
- Support inter-district exchanges and partnerships between schools and universities.
- Coordinate collaboration and the exchange of information between regional employers and districts.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Collaborate with Regional Education Service Centers and school districts to respond to critical professional development issues and opportunities.
- Create professional development partnerships with high schools to provide teachers, administrators, and support staff greater access to educational research, joint high school and university faculty appointments and internships for education students.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

- Structure technical assistance to support campus and district planning for professional development.
- Develop classroom observation models that incorporate instructional effectiveness, meaningful teacher appraisal, and campus planning for improvement.
- Support professional development liaison and networking efforts between campuses, districts, and Regional Education Service Centers.
- Promote greater use of alternative certification programs.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Make teacher appraisal rules relevant to classroom activities, focused on educational outcomes and campus planning for professional development, and supportive of ongoing mentoring and peer coaching.
- Expand training in instructional leadership and uniform appraisal to include instructional outcomes and objectives.

STATE LEGISLATURE

- Fund extended contracts and staff development for professional educators.
- Increase teachers' salaries initially to at least the national average and ultimately to the nation's highest.
- Increase the number of paid noninstructional professional development days for teachers and administrators.
- Separate teacher appraisal from the career ladder.
- Enact statutes that encourage innovation and reward educational achievement.

BUSINESSES

- Support district and regional collaborative efforts that provide information on and awareness of the applications of the knowledge and skills embedded in the high school curriculum.
- Assist educators in developing the skills and knowledge of effective management.

Student Supports

"Multiple services offered through a coordinated delivery system need to replace the current patchwork of support services."

— The Forgotten Half

TO ACHIEVE THEIR primary academic mission, high schools effectively address the economic, social, health, and personal barriers that may limit the achievement of their students. To meet needs that vary from student to student and often extend beyond the services provided by campus staff, the high school becomes a key participant in the coordinated delivery of support services provided by community and public institutions. Since the person most knowledgeable about an individual student's needs may be any adult on the campus, the entire high school staff constitutes the support network for students.

This campus-based network is itself supported through close working relationships between the high school and the broader community. Because the most critical and far-reaching relationship is that between the school and the home, the high school joins in flexible and effective partnerships with the student's parents. As a location containing large numbers of their clients, the high school campus provides a natural clearinghouse for the services offered through public and private organizations. To support the graduate's postsecondary plans, the high school collaborates with employers, technical schools, and higher education to provide school-to-work and school-to-school transition services.

"Well-designed case management efforts represent an opportunity to look at the whole person and to better organize services to reduce fragmentation and duplication. Case management helps participants bridge institutions."

—Texas Department of Commerce, *Creating a human investment system in Texas: No wrong door*

PHILOSOPHY

THE HIGH SCHOOL community envisioned by the task force supports student learning. The supports offered to students in their high school careers should accommodate diversity and create a foundation for student success, addressing the needs and dreams of each student and providing for the achievement of each student's post-secondary goals, regardless of family configuration, socioeconomic status, or primary language. Rather than minimizing the importance of this issue or assigning blame for problems that are outside the control of high school educators and administrators, the task force offers a straightforward proposal: High schools have no choice but to provide the supports that students need to succeed.

The task force challenges the high school community to support this proposal through a comprehensive guidance and counseling effort that coordinates student learning with explicit postsecondary goals, reduces anonymity and social isolation on the high school campus, and ensures the coordinated provision of health and human services to its students. Rather than setting counselor-student ratios or proposing that all campuses open multi-service clinics, this recommendation focuses on a restructuring of the roles and responsibilities of campus professional staff.

The task force envisions each teacher's daily activities expanding to include the ongoing advising, planning, and monitoring of specific students, usually on academic matters but potentially on all matters affecting those students. Counselors apply themselves to the guidance, consultative, coordinating, assessment, and program management tasks for which they are trained.

"Schoolpeople do too much preaching and not enough listening. They tell parents to act as they believe parents should act, but they don't listen when parents speak about how schools might behave differently, too."

—Anne Lewis,
A cup of kindness yet?

This restructuring accomplishes many things. Rather than witnessing a daily parade of students too numerous to know, teachers become directly involved in planning the high school careers of their students. No student is lost in the crowd because each has assured and regular access to an adult who knows rather than knows of the student. Counselors apply themselves to the kinds of tasks for which they are trained. The campus is configured for the early and accurate identification of student needs, simplifying service coordination and improving the likelihood that services will be effective.

The task force recognizes that this restructuring will have profound effects on how campus professionals are trained and how they interact with one another and students. Standard schedules, contracts, and compensation will all likely have to change. The traditional high school, with its dual focus on the academic and the extracurricular, will also change as the provision of support services becomes a standard goal of campus operations.

"Information should flow from employers to educators through recruiting and employee development activities, including the ways in which employees progress up career ladders. Educators, in turn, should inform employers of the workplace competencies that students have attained."

—Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance

STUDENT SUPPORTS

RECOMMENDATIONS

CLASSROOM

- Establish instructional practices and classroom opportunities to reduce anonymity between teachers and students and students and their peers.
- Monitor the impact of coordinated health and human services on student achievement.

CAMPUS

- Include the expected outcomes of coordinated education, health, and human services in campus planning and decision making.
- Develop monitoring, reporting and referral measures that link improving academic achievement to coordinated service delivery.
- Restructure the roles and duties of counselors to carry out proactive, student-centered guidance programs that shift duties away from clerical and administrative functions toward provision of guidance services and work with community service agencies.
- Provide opportunities for parent involvement that is meaningful to and valued by the families served by the school.

DISTRICT

- Develop a comprehensive plan for student support that integrates student-centered

guidance with the coordinated delivery of community health and human services.

- Include expected outcomes from this plan in district plans for developing programs and facilities and improving student achievement.
- Include models of coordinated service delivery in professional development programs.
- Devote resources to specialized counseling and support services that are proactive, student centered, and linked to the priorities of the primary mission of high school education.
- Work with families and local law enforcement, judicial, juvenile and criminal justice agencies to reduce the threat and incidence of school-linked violence and criminal activity.

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

- Work with county and/or regional entities to plan and develop effective community service delivery systems that complement campus and district services.
- Develop and disseminate effective models of comprehensive counseling and coordinated community service delivery.
- Work with regional law enforcement, judicial, juvenile and criminal justice agencies to coordinate responses to the threat and incidence of school-linked violence and criminal activity.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Include models of coordinated service delivery in professional development programs for educators and service providers.
- Develop expanded articulation arrangements that make postsecondary education accessible and meaningful to the largest possible number of students.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

- Develop guidelines that support the restructuring of counseling and guidance to provide greater coordination of education and health and human services.
- Work with state health and human service agencies to develop and disseminate effective models of community service coordination.
- Develop state-wide approaches to the problems posed by the threat and incidence of school-linked violence and criminal activity.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Expand the Academic Excellence Indicator System to include measures of how accurately schools assess and how effectively they respond to student needs.

STATE LEGISLATURE

- Establish an ongoing commitment to the coordination of education and health and human services in Texas.
- Include the provision of coordinated health and human services in the criteria considered in the Texas Successful Schools Award System.
- Enact statutes that allow for the flexible and effective application of education and health and human service funding.
- Enact statutes that put campus-based authorities on a par with civil juvenile authorities.

OTHER AGENCIES

- Work with state and local education agencies to plan and develop coordinated delivery of social and education services, including plans that address violence and crime in schools.

PARENTS

- Recognize that the ultimate form of parental involvement in education is personal involvement in the education of your children.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES

- Participate in the coordination of education, community, and social services as a method of enhancing local educational programs and student achievement.

Implementation Steps

"Schools have a way of subtly ejecting changes unless they are built in and made part and parcel of 'normal school life.'"

— Miles & Ekholm, *Will new structures stay restructured?*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

THE HIGH SCHOOL is that point at which public education, higher education, career expectations, and family goals converge. Both an end and a beginning, the high school embodies all of the challenges and promises that Texas faces as it enters into the 21st century. The recommendations made in this report are intended to improve the education of each high school student in Texas. Implementing these recommendations will require commitment and planning at all levels of our state's education system.

BUILD EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

As it travelled the state, the task force gained insight into the strengths of high school education in Texas. The expertise and dedication of high school educators, richness of the curriculum, variety of alternative programs, diversity of extracurricular opportunities, and level of community support are all elements of educational excellence that the task force wishes to nurture and support.

At the same time, the task force identified issues of educational equity that Texas must address. Put bluntly, too many students are getting too little education. In ensuring high quality educational opportunities for all Texas students, all Texans concerned with education must be willing to critique and modify institutional roles, responsibilities, and organizational patterns as well as notions of school and student accountability. It is important that this examination neither assign blame nor dissipate into arguments about rights and resources but steadfastly focus on improved student learning.

Provide Professional Development

The recommendations presented in this report emphasize expanded professional development. The task force calls upon the Legislature to provide financial support for this enhancement of the state's most important institution and challenges school districts, the Texas Education Agency, Regional Education Service Centers, and the state's colleges and universities to develop programs to enhance the abilities of educators to fulfill their responsibilities in the restructured high schools of the coming century.

Create a Network to Support High School Restructuring

Central to this idea of professional development is the creation of a support network that provides high school educators and allied professionals collaborative forums in which to develop methods to enhance student learning. The network should be locally focused but extend across the state to include schools of all types and sizes. It should involve vertical teams of high school administrators, teachers, and support staff. These networks should cross subject disciplines and provide overarching support to the communities of learning envisioned by the task force. The task force calls upon the Texas Education Agency to take the initiative in developing this network.

Communicate and Coordinate High School Reform

The task force also calls upon the Texas Education Agency to support the restructured high schools of tomorrow through the recently established Division of High School Education. The task force encourages that division to

strengthen the efforts of schools engaged in restructuring by activities such as the

- pursuit of funding opportunities to support networking activities;
- creation of a source book that contains descriptions and contact information of effective high school programs and practices;
- publication of a network newsletter; and
- provision of field service that is coordinated at the state and regional levels.

The task force urges the Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the Texas Education Agency to support the sustained restructuring of high schools through school reform initiatives that are coordinated and consistent. In all of its visits to high school campuses, the task force heard that mandates have not only been too numerous but have also shifted course too frequently.

Establish Local and State Conferences on High School Education

In presenting its policy statement and recommendations, the task force establishes only a beginning. It is hoped that the dialogue that produced this report will continue and expand with support from the State Board of Education, the Texas Education Agency, Regional Education Service Centers, school districts, campuses and professional associations. The task force calls upon these groups to organize ongoing forums to continue the discussions initiated by this task force on high school education in the 21st century.

In making its recommendations, the Task Force on High School Education focuses on improving student achievement by changing the relationship between teachers and students. The task force urges Texas to nurture that relationship and create conditions in which learning succeeds for every student, one student at a time.

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COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.

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